

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicants propose amending claim 1 and canceling claim 14. Accordingly, upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-13 will be pending in this application. No new matter will be introduced by this Amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-3 and 6-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,617,929 to Richardson et al. ("Richardson") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,065,560 to Palmeri et al. ("Palmeri"); claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richardson in view of Palmeri and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,478,308 to Klaassen; claims 4, 5, and 14 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim; and claims 12 and 13 were allowed. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter.

The final Office Action mailed October 2, 2006 states that claims 4, 5, and 14 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants propose amending independent claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 14. Applicants submit that claim 1 is now in condition for allowance.

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 2-11 would be allowable at least due to their dependency from independent claim 1. In addition, each of claims 2-11 recites unique combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by the cited art, and therefore each is also separately patentable.

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-13 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendment of claim 1 does not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Finally, Applicants submit that the entry of the amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account no. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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